

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-13
PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /062 W
-----120825 281213Z /20
O 281130Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1672

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 4837

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PA
SUBJ: PARAGUAY'S REPLY TO STEPHANSKY REPORT

REF: STATE 281372

1. FONMIN NOGUES TOLD DCM NOVEMBER 26 HE DOUBTED GOP WOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE A REPLY FOR AMBASSADOR STEPHANSKY WITHIN ANY REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME. HE HOPED IT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE POSSIBLE TO SEND STEPHANSKY A REPLY BY TELEX VIA PARAGUAYAN AMBASSADOR LOPEZ ESCOBAR, CORRECTING SOME FACTUAL ERRORS AND DISPUTING IN GENERAL TERMS SOME OF THE SUBJECTIVE CONCLUSIONS, BUT HE WAS BOGGED DOWN WITH WORK AND DID NOT KNOW WHEN SUCH A MESSAGE MIGHT BE SENT. (TRANSLATION: PROBABLE DIFFICULTY GETTING STROESSNER'S CLEARANCE.)

2. WHEN THE FIRST COPY OF THE REPORT FAILED TO ARRIVE IN ASUNCION (SENT BY STEPHANSKY BY OPEN MAIL IN SEPTEMBER), NOGUES HIMSELF HAD OBTAINED ONE AND BROUGHT IT BACK WHEN HE RETURNED FROM THE UNGA IN OCTOBER. THE THIRTY DAY (NOVEMBER 15) DEADLINE WAS UNREALISTIC FROM THE START: HE HAD HAD TO TRANSLATE THE LENGTHY DOCUMENT AND THE KEY MAN, INTERIOR MINISTER MONTANARO, HAD BEEN ABSENT FROM THE COUNTRY MUCH OF THE TIME AND HAD ONLY HAD A CHANCE TO READ IT CONE. THE PRESIDENT
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HAD ASKED NOGUES FOR HIS OPINION ("PRETTY BAD - DAMAGING TO PARAGUAY'S IMAGE ABROAD") AND THEREAFTER HAD NOT AGAIN RAISED THE SUBJECT OR OFFERED ANY GUIDANCE ON HOW TO HANDLE IT.

3. NOGUES AND MONTANARO FELT THAT TO ANSWER THE REPORT PROPERLY THEY WOULD HAVE "TO WRITE A BOOK,"

WHICH THEY WERE NOT ABOUT TO DO. STEPHANSKY HAD ALREADY TOLD LOPEZ ESCOBAR THAT IT WAS TOO LATE NOW TO CHANGE ANYTHING IN THE REPORT PRIOR TO PUBLICATION BUT THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO APPEND ANY COMMENTS FROM THE GOP. NOGUES WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT FEEL UNDER ANY GREAT PRESSURE TO DRAFT A REPLY, HE DID HOPE TO GET OFF SOME KIND OF ANSWER, ALONG THE LINES NOTED ABOVE.

4. NOGUES SAID LOPEZ ESCOBAR HAD TELEPHONED HIM ABOUT THE PROBLEM EARLIER IN THE WEEK, AND THAT HE WAS FULLY INFORMED AS TO THE REASONS FOR THE DELAY. IN ANSWER TO THE DCM'S QUESTION HE SAID THE GOP HAD NEVER CONSIDERED SENDING ITS REPLY THROUGH OUR EMBASSY, THOUGH HE APPRECIATED THE OFFER.

5. DCM SAID THAT SINCE STEPHANSKY IS GENUINELY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD PARAGUAY IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE GOP FAILED TO REACT AT ALL TO HIS REPORT. NOGUES' ONLY COMMENT WAS THAT STEPHANSKY MIGHT BE FRIENDLY, AND CERTAINLY HIS REPORT WAS CONSISTENTLY POLITE AND RESPECTFUL IN TONE, BUT THE OVERALL SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF PRESENT DAY PARAGUAY WAS "QUITE BAD."
WHITE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTION, HUMAN RIGHTS, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ASUNCIO4837
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770439-1035
Format: TEL
From: ASUNCION
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771115/aaaaammv.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 77cdbe10-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 281372
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 440070
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARAGUAY'S REPLY TO STEPHANSKY REPORT
TAGS: SHUM, PA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/77cdbe10-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009